

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 L-02 OFA-01 TRSE-00 FEA-01

ACDA-05 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05

FMC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-03 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OIC-02 /115 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1061

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 454

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, MU

SUBJECT: LOS: OMANI POSITION ON STRAITS

REF: GENEVA 2288 (NOTAL)

1. ON APRIL 12 EMBOFF DISCUSSED STRAITS ISSUE AT SOME LENGTH WITH FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY YUSUF AL-ALAWI. CONVERSATION DID NOT RESULT IN ANY MODIFICATION OF OMANI POSITION, BUT DID INDICATE FURTHER THAT OMANGOV MAY NOT HAVE CONSIDERED ALL ASPECTS OF ISSUE AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THAT THEY MIGHT STILL BE OPEN TO REASONED ARGUMENT.

2. AL-ALAWI FLATLY STATED THAT THERE WAS NO OMANGOV INTENTION TO EXEMPT STRAITS OF HORMUZ FROM GENERAL REGIME (PARA 1, REFTEL). HE UNDERSTOOD AND SEEMINGLY APPRECIATED EMBOFF'S REITERATION THAT RIPARIAN STATE DETERMINATION OF "INNOCENCE" INEVITABLY WOULD CREATE TENSIONS AND THAT BROADER INTERESTS

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OF OMAN'S FRIENDS WOULD BE AFFECTED NEGATIVELY BY SUCH A

FORMULATION (E.G. CONTROL OVER ROTATION OF UNITS INTO SIXTH FLEET). NONETHELESS, HE RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES TO CORE PROBLEM FOR OMAN: HOW TO BAR PASSAGE OF "HOSTILE" VESSELS AND THOSE WHICH MIGHT PRESENT UNACCEPTABLE POLLUTION THREAT.

3. ON CONTROL OF "HOSTILE" VESSELS, EMBOFF ARGUED THAT USG POSITION WOULD BE SHARPLY TO DELIMIT PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES DURING TRANSIT (E.G. NO MILITARY EXERCISES OR ACTIVITY). ON QUESTION OF POLLUTION THREAT, STRINGENT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS SEEM TO BE BEST SOLUTION (COUPLED WITH OPTION OF COASTAL STATE TO SET EVEN STRICTER STANDARDS FOR VESSELS CALLING AT HER PORTS). AGAIN, USING INNOCENT PASSAGE FORMULA TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM INEVITABLY WOULD GIVE RISE TO TENSION, QUITE POSSIBLY WITH OTHERWISE FRIENDLY POWERS.

4. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT OMANIS HAVE COORDINATED THEIR LOS POSITION CLOSELY WITH IRAN, ALTHOUGH SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED DURING EARLY 1974 VISIT BY SULTAN QABOOS TO TEHRAN. WE UNDERSTAND IRANIANS IN FAVOR OF FREE PASSAGE (PLEASE CONFIRM). AT ANY RATE, IT WOULD BE MISLEADING TO CAST OMAN IN ROLE OF STALKING HORSE ON LOS ISSUES (PARA 6 OF REFTTEL).

5. AL-ALAWI PROMISED TO REVIEW POINTS MADE BY EMBOFF AND TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE AT A LATER DATE. EMBASSY INTENDS TO PURSUE MATTER, AS WE BELIEVE THERE IS SOME CHANCE OF GIVE IN OMANGOV POSITION. IN THIS CONNECTION, REQUEST INFORMATION RE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL POLLUTION STANDARDS (APART FROM OCEAN DUMPING CONVENTION).
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